

**(Washington, DC)** Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) introduced the *Increasing Access to Voluntary Screening for HIV/AIDS and STIs Act of 2011*, which will help reduce the spread and morbidities associated with HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).  
**(Please find attached a copy of the bill).**

Among other things, this bill requires Medicaid to cover voluntary screening for HIV/AIDS and other STIs as a mandatory service for all individuals 13 and older, and requires the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to provide Medicare reimbursement for such tests for all beneficiaries 13 and older.

In addition, this Act requires group health plans, insurance issuers providing group or individual health insurance coverage, and federal employee health benefits programs to cover routine screening for HIV/AIDS and other STIs; provides states with the support they need to cover low-income individuals infected with HIV until Medicaid is expanded in 2014 under the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*; and supports access to early medical and mental treatment by linking patients to appropriate services.

"HIV/AIDS and STIs are 'syndemics' – overlapping epidemics. Each year in the United States, almost 19 million new STIs occur and an estimated 56,300 Americans are newly infected with HIV. Due to various factors, including stigma, a lack of health care coverage, and an inaccurate perception of risk among communities and providers, HIV and other long-term, initially asymptomatic STIs often remain undiagnosed or are diagnosed at later stages.

"All individuals engaging in sexual contact must have access to voluntary screening that is confidential, rapid, accurate, and medically appropriate. In addition, supporting scientifically based, culturally competent, and age-appropriate interventions is key to reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS and other STIs. Combining the effectiveness of voluntary, routine screening with smart policy can help stem their transmission and improve the health outcomes associated with these infections.

"The *Increasing Access to Voluntary Screening for HIV/AIDS and STIs Act of 2011* takes an aggressive and multifaceted approach to combating HIV/AIDS and other STIs, including

Chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and human papillomavirus (HPV), by increasing access to voluntary screening and other preventive methods while preserving patient rights and confidentiality.

"HIV/AIDS and STIs remain a significant challenge to individual and public health. Through early detection and treatment, as well as comprehensive education for health care providers and communities, we can begin to reverse the tide of infections and improve the health of our communities and nation as a whole."

***Original Co-sponsors (25) include: Representatives John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI), Raul M. Grijalva (D-AZ), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Jim McGovern (D-MA), Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. (D-IL), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Robert A. Brady (D-PA), Maurice D. Hinchey (D-NY), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Ted Deutch (D-FL), Donald M. Payne (D-NJ), Jose E. Serrano (D-NY), Bobby L. Rush (D-IL), Donna M. Christensen (D-VI), Gwen Moore (D-WI), Wm. Lacy Clay (D-MO), Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr. (D-GA), Mike Quigley (D-IL), Barney Frank (D-MA), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Charles B. Rangel (D-NY), Jared Polis (D-CO), David Cicilline (D-RI), Danny K. Davis (D-IL), and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI).***

In addition, the ***Increasing Access to Voluntary Screening for HIV/AIDS and STIs Act of 2011*** is supported by the Harlem United AIDS Center, The AIDS Institute, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA), the Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services (UCHAPS), AIDS United, the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD), the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), and the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD).

*Congressman Alcee L. Hastings serves as Senior Member of the House Rules Committee, Ranking Democratic Member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and Democratic Chairman of the Florida Delegation.*

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 [&nbsp;Rep. Alcee L. Hastings Screening Bill 2011.pdf](#)

